

**Mad River Valley Planning District**  
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes  
**September 21, 2017, 7:00 P.M.**  
**General Wait House, Waitsfield**

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectboard

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commission; Kari Dolan, Selectboard

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard; Jim Sanford, Planning Commission

Sugarbush: Margo Wade

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Apologies

CVRPC: Eric Vorwald

The meeting opened at 7:05 pm. Bob Ackland, Chair, brought the meeting to order.

**I. Adjustments to the Agenda**

**II. Public Comment**

**III. Accept Minutes of 7/20/17 Steering Committee Meeting**

1. Jared moved to accept the minutes, Steve Shea seconded the motion.

**IV. Staff Report**

**1. Economic Development**

- a. **Warren Main Street Improvement Project:** Construction of the project and the adjacent bridge rehab is complete, Final Reimbursement has been received, and the Town is awaiting approval of its Final Report. The only outstanding item is the procurement and installation of a bench. The Planning Commission is also working on a bike rack.
- b. **Waitsfield Pocket Park/Lovett Park Project:** The project was substantially completed on time and 45% under budget. The local match totaled \$10,900.
  - i. Steve said that since construction he has only heard positive feedback about the project. Kari said that she is pleased that that it was 45% under budget and she really appreciates the effort and positivity Joshua put into the project.

**2. Flood Resilience/Water Quality/Climate Change**

- a. Joshua has been assisting the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities on its case study about Mad River Valley and Vermont's work with EPA for use in a larger project showcasing success stories from several communities. Specifically, they are highlighting the SGIA work and the next steps taken by the community (Ridge to River, Lovett Park, etc). The story map featuring several stories, including the VT and Mad River Valley case study – will be released in early October.

- b. The 6/29-7/1/17 severe storms and flooding resulted in a Federal Disaster Declaration for Washington and Orange Counties on 8/16 (#4330-VT). This made corresponding towns eligible for Public Assistance funds to reimburse the cost of repairs from the storm's damage (Warren has applied for funds for damage to Airport Rd). CVRPC is serving as primary support for towns interested in taking advantage of these PA funds. The deadline to submit a Public Assistance Request form to the state was 9/14. Due to the disaster, Vermont will receive FEMA funds for hazard mitigation projects. These funds are in addition to the Public Assistance funds.
- c. CVRPC received a grant from VT DEC to complete a stormwater master plan for the five towns in the Mad River watershed (Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren, and Waitsfield). All communities and partner watershed groups (Friends of the Mad River) are excited to prioritize stormwater issues so they can seek funding for project implementation. They are looking for members to join the SWMP steering committee.
- d. Joshua is coordinating with Corrie Miller of FMR on hosting a community event focused on recent MRV-centric climate change research being undertaken by UVM and the EPSCoR funded BREE and RACC projects. The intention is to link this work with Ridge to River's 10/11 event, entitled [Climate of Change - A Mad River Valley Community Forum](#). R2R selectboard members have agreed to host the Town Road station at the forum. Roger Hill from Weathering Heights will be the keynote speaker.

### **3. Transportation**

- a. MRV Transportation Advisory Committee
  - i. MRV TAC is ramping up for the 2017/2018 Mad Bus Season. GMT is awaiting a decision by their Board on proposed changes to the Valley Floor route and schedule (proposed changes would make the first 3 trips of the day direct between Lincoln Peak and Waitsfield via Rt. 100, and return the current route and schedule for the remaining trips). GMT has also proposed the elimination of the SnowCap Commuter (service between Montpelier & MRV on the weekends, making requested stops to MRG). MRVPD is assisting with outreach ahead of the start of service (marketing, sponsorship, pocket version of map & guide w/ SB trail map, map changes, etc).
- b. Waitsfield West Sidewalk Project
  - i. The LPM is currently working with the five property owners to obtain temporary easements for construction; thus far he has received an easement from The Valley Players.
  - ii. Joshua met with Kari Dolan on 8/31 to explore the project's next steps. More on this topic will be discussed during the Work Plan agenda item.
- c. During the week of 8/26 VTrans paved a section of the east side of Route 17 in Waitsfield & Fayston. Kristine followed up with several VTrans staff to understand how they were able to pave this section of road given the fact that it was not selected during the annual prioritization process. She was told that

each year each District receives “Mad Money” that can be used to “patch” sections of road. District 5 selected this particular section of Route 17 because they determined that it was the worst in their district and the bid came in low enough that they were able to do more than a usual patch job.

#### **4. Housing**

- a. Kristine is finalizing the 2017 MRV Housing Study, which updates the 2006 version. A final draft is completed and staff is working on editing it for the final version. Kristine also completed a draft of the ~15 page double-sided summary document that will be easier to read and digest. She has solicited several quotes for printing services.
  - i. Jared asked how staff is planning to distribute the printed copy? Josh said we are planning to distribute it to each Planning Commission, Selectboard, and to the general public. Kristine explained that the consultants for the Warren and Waitsfield town plan rewrites have seen a draft version of the whole study, and the Waitsfield Planning Commission and Downstreet Housing & Community Development received a draft version of the summary document. The Valley Reporter is also interested in reading the final copy.
- b. Mad River Valley Housing Coalition met on 8/1 and Martin Hahn, VHCB's Director of Housing, discussed the \$35 million in funding available for new affordable housing projects in Vermont over the next several years through the Housing for All initiative.
  - i. Kristine spoke with Downstreet Housing & Community Development on 9/21 and discussed the possibility of submitting an application for a project on the vacant parcel near Mad River Meadows. Downstreet is pursuing this, undertaking a feasibility analysis and is in contact with VHCB.
- c. Tiny House Pilot Project – Kristine has been working on understanding wastewater regs, financing, supporting Norwich Univ. grant to finish the construction of a tiny house to be moved to Vermont Mobile Home Park.
  - i. Steve asked what Kristine learned about the wastewater regulations and how that relates to tiny houses? Kristine explained that in talking to a permit specialist at ANR that any wastewater system has to be designed and built for 2-bedrooms even if the unit only has 1-bedroom. They also require a wastewater system to handle greywater even if the unit has a composting toilet.
- d. Tenants for Turns- Sugarbush decided to move forward with a Tenants for Turns program on 6/30. Kristine has had several meetings with various departments at Sugarbush in order to support their effort to develop and market the program for the upcoming winter season.

#### **5. Recreation**

- a. MRVPD co-hosted the 2017 MRV Trails Summit with the MRV Recreation District on 9/6 at Sugarbush Resort in order to foster communication between community groups engaged in trail-based recreation in the MRV, identify shared priorities, and develop actionable steps for further collaboration to

improve the quality and accessibility of the MRV's trail network. 22 people were in attendance representing 16 different organizations.

- i. The major takeaways from the Summit include an interest in trail network signage and updated mapping (online and paper), a need for supplementary support for trail maintenance beyond existing volunteer networks, and additional funding for trails- particularly for administration/operations, maintenance, and easement incentives.
  - ii. MRVPD and MRVRD set up a working group meeting to discuss trail network signage on 9/25 with a subgroup from the Trail Summit.
  - iii. Kristine developed a Trail Milestones timeline for the Summit with the help of the Mad River Path Association and Mad River Rides to capture the breadth and depth of MRV's trail network over the years.
  - iv. Steve asked how in need the local trail organizations are for maintenance resources? Bob said in comparison to Stowe, the MRV trails need maintenance. Kari said the Town of Stowe provides \$10,000 a year for maintenance and she believes \$10,000 for construction grants. Josh explained that there was feedback at the Summit that the trail groups want support for pursuing additional funding through the MRVPD and MRVRD.
- b. Mad River Path Update
- i. MRPA has received DRB and State approval to move forward with the Phase 1 improvements to the Waitsfield Village Path in Irasville. Kristine has spent a lot of time supporting this project.

## **6. Mapping**

- a. Kristine and Iliyan Deskov, MRVPD intern, completed two GIS maps of Waitsfield's water system requested by the Town Administrator.
- b. Kristine and Iliyan Deskov are now working on a GIS analysis to evaluate the suitability of available land for additional decentralized wastewater infrastructure in both Irasville and Waitsfield Village.
  - i. Kristine has had trouble getting a hold of water line CAD file. Kari and Steve agreed that the town should have it on file and that Kristine can contact Phelps Engineering to try and obtain it.

## **7. Energy**

- a. CVRCP has not received comments yet from the Dept. of Public Service's review of the draft Central Vermont Regional Energy Plan. The final plan needs to be approved by July of next year.
- b. The Legislature, through the Public Service Department, has provided a second round of funding for local energy planning. Each RPC will work one-on-one with at least four municipalities to ensure implementation of Act 174. The deadline won't be until next year sometime for local energy plans that are completed in the second round.
- c. Steve asked Eric about the approval process for Waitsfield's town plan by CVRPC; Eric said they would talk separately after the meeting.

## **8. Municipal**

- a. Joshua and Kristine are providing input on both Waitsfield & Warren's Town Plan rewrites.

## **9. Natural Communities**

- a. Waitsfield's Scrag Gateway project closed on 7/28. A community celebration of the Gateway Project and Scrag is being scheduled for 10/15.

## **10. Other**

- a. Joshua and Kristine attended the 8/10 Opening Ceremony for Mad River Taste. The work of MRVPD and the Vision & Vitality Workshop Series were credited in the opening remarks and associated press release. Joshua was interviewed for Vermont Life magazine's upcoming Winter issue about it.

## **V. New Business**

### **1. MRV Logo**

- a. Joshua gave a presentation that went over the history of the Vision and Vitality work, the Chamber's strategic plan, and the tactics to implement their plan, which include unified use of the MRV logo and signage. Their plan identifies destination marketing, building brand equity, visitor experience, and unity/community experience as reasons to pursue more widespread use of the MRV logo and development of wayfinding and trail network signage.
- b. MRVCC & MRVPD Collaboration- organizations have been working together for 5 months on the MRV logo update project. Josh explained that this work also has direct benefits for the MRVPD:
  - i. MRVPD logo, which the organization has never had before.
  - ii. MRV Moves Action Plan speaks to similar implementation steps related to network signage, reinforcing wayfinding and placemaking in the MRV.
- c. Josh then explained the process that the MRV Chamber and MRVPD used to arrive at the updated version of the logo.
  - i. Logo refinement- the goal was to improve the quality, usability & professionalism. There was a significant amount of funding and time put into developing the previous version of the Chamber logo, and this process was not intended to be a full rebrand, but just a refresh.
    - 1. Jim asked what the MRV Byway Logo looks like and Josh said the byway logo took inspiration from the previous version of the Chamber logo.
  - ii. Broaden use of the logo beyond the MRV Chamber- the new logo provides opportunities for sub-branding (Chamber, MRVPD, MRVRD). Both the Chamber & MRVRD have already adopted the new logo and the proposal on the table tonight is for the MRVPD to do the same.
  - iii. Variety of applications- the idea is to also incorporate the logo into a variety of co-branding applications including infrastructure (vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycling wayfinding signage, trail signage, etc.), and the potential for the towns to consider adopting the logo as well in the future.
- d. Jared moved to adopt the MRVPD logo as presented, and Kari seconded. Bob asked if there was any further discussion.
  - i. Jim asked if any local artists were engaged in the design process, and Josh said no due to the desire of carrying out a light and fast process.

- ii. Bob said when the last version of the Chamber logo was created the larger community was involved and the new version of the logo includes all of the same elements.
- iii. Margo asked if the Chamber reached out to the ski areas to see how they could incorporate the new logo. Josh said Jasmine talked with both Sugarbush and Mad River Glen.
- iv. Peter MacLaren couldn't be at the meeting so Josh read his comments on logo, which included the fact that having agreement on the logo from all key players is an important next step.
- v. Eric asked if there is any concern that the logos are so similar there could be confusion between the Chamber, MRVPD, MRVRD? Bob said he thinks this approach helps to bring the organizations together.
- vi. Kristine mentioned that the logo was introduced at the Trail Summit and there seemed to be agreement that it could be used for unified signage.
- vii. Jim said he didn't like the last version of the Chamber logo or the MRV Byway logo either, but he can't argue with tying organizations together and if everyone wants to adopt it then he will be on board. He wouldn't vote for it as the Town of Warren logo (if he had a say in it).
- viii. In terms of trail signage, Bob said he doesn't think that visitors are concerned about who's trail it is, but rather where the trails are and how to navigate them. He said he thinks the more important discussion is how this logo gets used in various applications.
- ix. Bob asked the Committee to a vote, 5 votes in favor, it was a unanimous decision to adopt the MRV logo as the MRVPD logo.

## **2. MRVPD FY18 Workplan & Budget Update**

- a. Joshua gave a presentation that highlighted the work plan items that are "done", "in progress", "no progress", "things that have cropped up," and "things that are cropping up" to consider for next fiscal year.
- b. Jared asked staff to provide feedback on the "things that have cropped up," in terms of which ones have taken the most amount of time? Kristine said her support for the MRPA Irasville path upgrade project.
- c. He followed up to ask how much time staff spent related to the Lawson's Finest Liquids project? Josh said staff didn't spend any more time than they thought they would. Jared acknowledged that the project is a huge win for Lawson's, the Town of Waitsfield (particularly investments in water & wastewater infrastructure), and MRVPD. Jim also highlighted the fact that it's also a huge win for Irasville. Steve said he thought that the Planning Commission's timeline to work on the planning and rezoning of Irasville in 2018 should work out well given the new development that's happening.
- d. Joshua went through the list of "things that are cropping up," including the Waitsfield West Sidewalk Project, bike rack for Warren Main Street, potential Warren 2018 Bike/Ped Grant Application (Sugarbush Access Rd Path or Main Street sidewalk rehab), GMT NextGen Transit Study planning & outreach, Button Up Vermont campaign, and potential bus service to Mad River Glen based on the outcome of the parking situation this season.
- e. Kari wanted to have a more indepth discussion of the potential for more involvement from the MRVPD in the Waitsfield Wet Sidewalk, Phase II project.

- i. She said that it is one of the remaining big projects in Waitsfield and they are feeling project fatigue, having cash flow issues, and they have been wrestling with how to manage the project going forward. In order to get the project across the finish line, there are some final tasks including temporary easements, breaking down the costs of the project, and developing budget options that need to be done. She said Waitsfield is going to build a sidewalk, but the question is what is it going to look like?
- ii. She said that her and Joshua had a brainstorming session and created FAQs for selectboard members and the public, as well as identified next steps.
- iii. She said what Waitsfield really needs in terms of next steps is to decide on the management of the project. She suggested that this might be an occasion where the MRVPD commits additional resources to a particular municipal need and shows added value to the towns.
- iv. Joshua said he sees the first step in this process to be understanding the current budget estimate, so we can articulate it to others. He said that if it would fit within the MRVPD work plan, and the Selectboard decides it is what they want to do, Kristine could be the LPM for the project based on her past experience as a project manager. He also highlighted the fact that MRVPD's role has been evolving from purely planning to more of an implementation role.
- v. Bob said that in the future the MRVPD could serve as the LPM for municipal projects in the three towns. The towns could save money by not hiring an LPM for individual projects. He originally considered asking for a fee to serve as the LPM for the Waitsfield West Sidewalk project, but this would be more of a learning process for MRVPD and down the road if it works out it might make sense to think about a fee.
- vi. Jim said he is concerned about the MRVPD signing onto a controversial project and how that might affect the MRVPD's role in the community. Bob said every project is controversial. Steve said he sees the sidewalk as fundamental infrastructure in Waitsfield.
- vii. Bob said that MRVPD does not do the job of selling the project; he said the town has to decide if this is the direction they want to go in and the MRVPD could assist.
- viii. Kari said the next steps would include updating the selectboard about the project and budget, reaching out to Vtrans to let them know how the Town is going to proceed, and finally there would be a public process to arrive at a final decision.
- ix. Kristine explained that there doesn't appear to be a straight forward approval process for LPMs; MRVPD would have to be considered municipal employees, RPC employees, or private contractors but we don't fit perfectly into any of those boxes.
- x. Bob asked if the Waitsfield selectboard has heard about this proposal and Kari acknowledged that they haven't. Bob suggested waiting to see how the Waitsfield selectboard wants to proceed, but MRVPD would need to know that there was no hesitation from the selectboard if we were to sign

on to serve this role. At that point, he asked if Josh would determine what the impact it would have on the FY18 Work Plan.

### **3. 2017 MRV Town Leadership Mtg**

- a. The group discussed possible dates and selected Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm.
- b. Josh explained that MRVPD needs to have their budget in place ahead of the Leadership meeting. Jim suggested the budget be the main agenda item for the October Steering Committee meeting.
- c. Josh wanted to discuss the proposed agenda for the Leadership meeting, which would be a joint meeting of MRVPD & MRVRD. MRVPD would present the 2017 Data Report and facilitate a discussion and MRVRD would present their strategic plan. Kari suggested that the Chamber is invited to discuss their strategic plan.
- d. Steve suggested having the November Steering Committee meeting a week early (November 9<sup>th</sup>) before the Leadership Meeting and it could be canceled if not needed. The group agreed.
- e. Bob proposed the idea to the group of doing a half day retreat because two hour meetings are not long enough to really discuss the future of the MRVPD. He said it would have to be a public meeting. The group agreed to schedule a retreat.
  - i. Some topics to explore are the role of the MRVPD (including potential project management), MOU revisions with Sugarbush, and the future of CVP/economic development work.
  - ii. Bob is hoping the retreat can be held at the West Hill House B&B from lunch until 3 or 5pm. Bob will send out a Doodle to the group.

### **4. Sugarbush Update**

- a. Margo provided an update from Sugarbush. She said that the Town of Fayston, Friends of the Mad River, and Sugarbush are applying for an Ecosystem Restoration grant for stormwater master planning. The lift projects are moving forward and inspections should happen later in October. She also explained that the VT DEC is doing an all-staff meeting at Sugarbush and facility tours in the near term.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **1. MRVPD Administrative Update**

- a. Bob explained that things have been moving along but there has been a learning curve. He said the MRVPD is in a good place financially.

## **VII. Events/Workshops**

1. Kari told the group that Congressman Peter Welch is coming to Waitsfield to visit CDBG-DR grant projects at 1:15pm-1:45pm. She said that she also mentioned the other projects in the area, but he only has time for one site visit. Joshua said he would be in attendance.

## **VII. Next meeting 10/19**

Jared moved to adjourn, Kari seconded. Meeting closed at 9:16pm.